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**The Pros and Cons of Utilizing Digital Storytelling in the Classroom**

The use of Digital Storytelling in educational classroom settings represents our society’s progressive move forward away from the heavily mechanized *Industrial Age*, and establishing a firm footing in the new multimedia technological *Information Age*. The synergistic use of video, audio, graphic and print communication mediums to instruct, entertain, or simply communicate on a personal/ informal level portend very interesting consequences for the global community, affecting educational, legal, medical and social institutions in positive and negative ways alike.

Obviously, the most exciting and practical benefit of the emergence of digital storytelling as an educational tool is its ability to grant access to information to a wide range of students (and other consumers), with various levels of academic abilities, and allows them the opportunity to gain hands on experience in the creation and dissemination of academic and personal content in interesting and innovative ways. The digital, global/social, technological, visual and information literacies of multimedia technology users is significantly enhanced through digital storytelling. Students who may experience difficulties with printed text can access information through graphic, video and/or audio mediums. Gardner’s position that human beings all possess *multiple intelligences* with varying degrees of strengths and weaknesses in each, if true, means that the multimedia technological tools that are being introduced into our classrooms are almost certain to appeal to and (possibly) improve at least a few of those intelligences, whether visual, auditory, or kinesthetic. The focused and truncated nature of these digital storytelling formats prevent sensory overload of information, as more complex printed texts or longer version videos might do. Greater access to more diverse cultural and socioeconomic groups and opportunities for distance learning collaborations is made possible through the utilization of the various mediums provided through digital storytelling. A psychologically and emotionally restorative expressive conduit—through the creation and release of *personal narratives*—is also made readily available. Most importantly, digital storytelling technology opens up stimulating and creative new ways for educators, students, and business people alike to transmit important historical, scientific and other relevant academic, business or personal information in increasingly more user-friendly , sensory appealing ways.

Problems with the digital storytelling format are legal and contextual in nature. Copyright infringement, and/or school district policies concerning appropriate images and audio materials used in presentations represent major concerns; because, students may or may not be versed in educational fair use and intellectual property parameters that place restrictions on materials gleaned from Internet sources. Content of the narratives; equal access to technology; proper time to produce cogent narratives; and, sufficient computer storage issues are all concerns, particularly in educational settings.